

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**NEIGHBOURHOODS  
CABINET MEMBER**

**INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To approve a new post to deliver independent travel training for eligible children and young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.
- Independent travel training can provide significant social and financial benefits for children and young people, particularly those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.
  - Focused training and support is necessary to develop the skills and confidence to travel independently.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Officers have explored the opportunity to provide an Independent Travel Training (ITT) service aimed at helping eligible children and young people gain the necessary skills to travel independently. This would involve creating a new post of Assessment and Travel Training Officer. The proposal contained in this paper is initially to operate this new service as a pilot for a period of 24 months.
- 2.2 ITT is a structured programme to enable people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to travel independently. We would initially look to provide the service for relevant secondary aged and post 16 students.
- 2.3 The main health and social benefits of ITT include the following:
- Increased independence and confidence, and improved self-esteem;
  - Increased opportunity to participate in social and leisure activities, and generally broadened horizons;
  - Improvement to general health and well-being, improved quality of life;
  - Potential for recipients to gain a qualification and or recognition on completion of the training;
  - Increased opportunity to access healthcare services
  - Increased opportunity and likelihood of entering employment or education;

- The main benefit to parents and carers is a reduction in care responsibilities, enabling greater participation in employment, education and leisure activities.
- 2.4 The council is required to offer home to school transport in certain circumstances. These include where a safe walking route from home to school is either greater than two miles for pupils under eight years of age or greater than three miles for older pupils. However, if children have special educational needs and/or mobility difficulties the council may be obliged to provide transport irrespective of distance.
  - 2.5 For post 16 pupils, the council provides a concessionary fare scheme. Support is available for students who need to travel more than three miles to attend a course of further education. However, if post 16 students have special educational needs and/or mobility difficulties the council may be obliged to provide transport irrespective of distance.
  - 2.6 Children and young people receive a transport solution based on their particular needs. Often, mini-buses and taxis are provided on a 'door-to-door' basis. In some cases, a passenger transport assistant accompanies the children in question. This can prove a costly and resource intensive arrangement. Some young people may stay on this type of transport for longer than is necessary. This is because there is currently no travel training available to assist their transition to an alternative and often more appropriate mode of transport such as a public service bus.
  - 2.7 For young people to successfully make this transition, they need to develop new skills so they can travel on buses, trains, bicycles or as a pedestrian confidently, safely and easily. These skills include road safety, cash handling, socialisation, how to request information, resilience, reading timetables, what to do if scheduled transport is unavailable. The ITT would aim to work with a small number of young people at any given time to enhance their skills sufficiently to allow them to travel independently.
  - 2.8 As all young people have different needs, their training programmes would vary accordingly. In some cases, the training would likely prove short-term. This might include supporting them becoming familiar with boarding and alighting from a coach; through to longer-term more intensive involvement, encompassing the need to acquire a range of the essential skills that most people take for granted.
  - 2.9 The proposed Assessment and Travel Training Officer post would provide the capacity and skills needed to deliver the ITT. Officers have completed a job description for the post in question. The job description was subject to the standard job evaluation process operated by the council. This yielded a grade 5. It is initially proposed to recruit to the new post for a 24 month fixed term period. This will in the first instance allow the ITT programme to operate as a pilot. Officers will then review

the success of the pilot before making recommendations regarding its sustainability. The post would operate within the Transport team in Community Services.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the creation of a new post of Assessment and Travel Training Officer to deliver independent travel training for eligible children and young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The Department for Transport suggest that; *“Education Travel training has proven beneficial in enabling all users of public transport, not just disabled people, to have equality of access and independence. It assists in overcoming challenges, removes barriers to independent travel and gives people greater access to jobs, services, and social networks. It empowers people to take greater control in their lives, enabling them to learn new skills and take advantage of opportunities in their communities.”<sup>1</sup>*
- 4.2 Providing an ITT service will help children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities move more easily into adulthood, which is a requirement of the special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years.
- 4.3 In addition to the health and social benefits outlined in 2.3, the main financial benefits of ITT include the following:
- Cost savings as a result of reduced demand on council provided transport services, such as taxis and escorted travel to schools;
  - Cost savings in transport associated with healthcare, such as home visits;
  - Reduced reliance on welfare benefits due to long term increase in independence and accessibility to employment opportunities;
  - Supporting a culture of independence and not reliance.

### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 The proposal includes creating a new full time grade 5 post of Assessment and Travel Training Officer. The annual mid-point cost of the post in question amounts to £22,629 inclusive of on-costs. Additional annual costs of around £4,000 are anticipated associated with delivering the ITT programme.
- 5.2 Independent travel training provides significant scope for cost reductions as referenced above. In the short term, as an illustrative example, net annual savings in the region of £8,000 are potentially achievable by one passenger moving from a single use taxi to public

transport. However, as most taxis transport several passengers, it may take some time to realise the full potential whole life cost benefits. Officers will present an annual report on the ITT initiative after 12 months of operation. This will set out any cost savings achieved and any further cost savings forecast.

- 5.3 The Transport team will meet any costs of providing the service over the initial two-year pilot period. However, we hope to offset these via savings on existing home to school etc transport costs. Thereafter, should the service continue it is hoped that it would prove self-financing, resulting from savings achieved on our home to school transport costs.

## **6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

- 6.1 The proposal will ensure that adequate resources are in place to discharge our statutory functions and to support young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to become more independent.

## **7. OUTCOMES CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED**

- 7.1 The proposal to create an ITT service came via the council's Disabled Children and Young People Special Educational Need Partnership. This group comprises of parents and professionals. They fully endorse the proposal. Relevant officers from both the People and Places directorates have worked on developing the proposal and will work closely in taking it forward if approved.

- 7.2 Officers have provided the trade unions with a copy of this report. They have so far raised no concerns with the proposals. Officers will provide a verbal update if any further feedback is received prior to the Cabinet Member briefing meeting.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 To approve the creation of a new post of Assessment and Travel Training Officer to deliver independent travel training for eligible children and young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

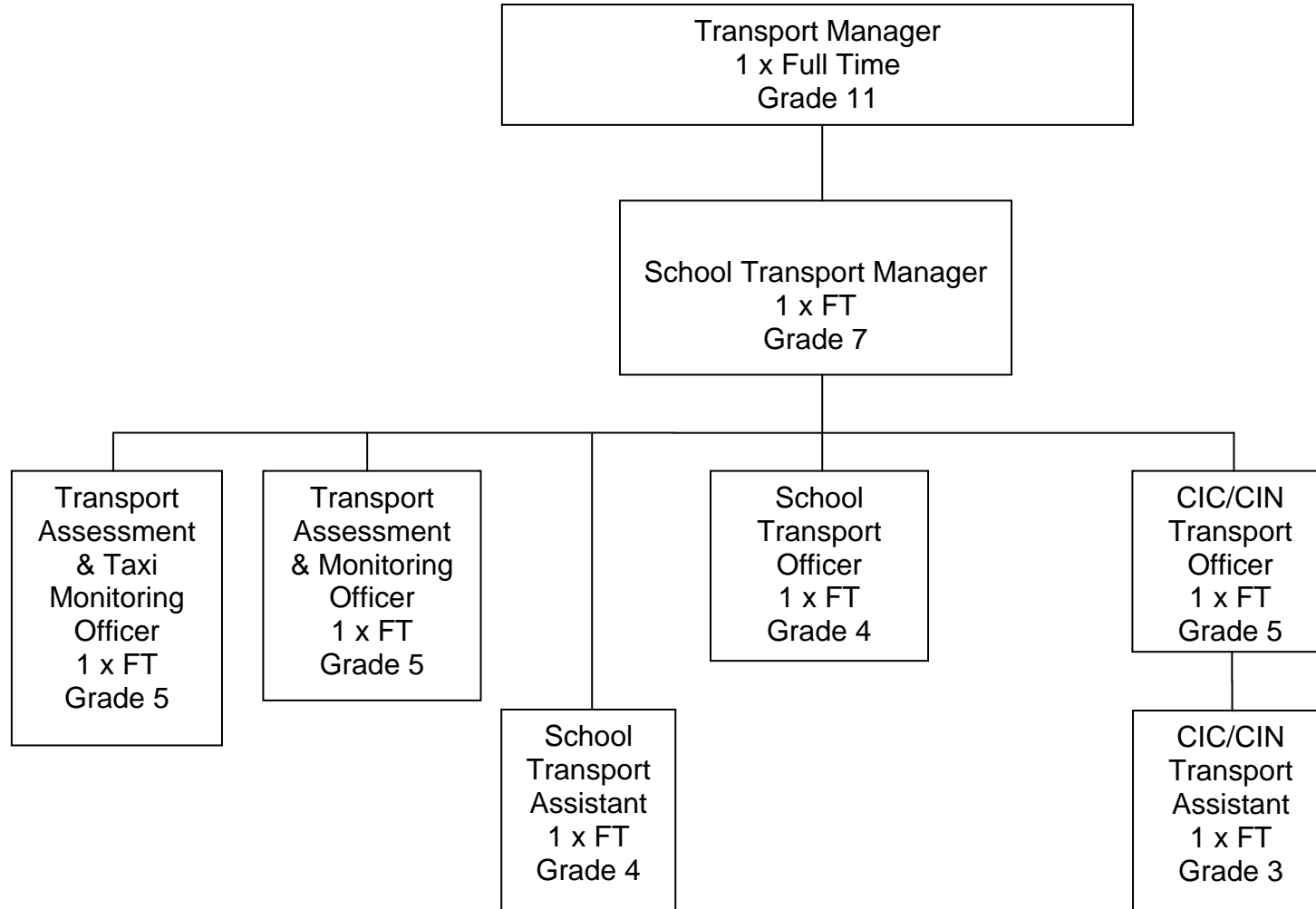
Civic Centre  
Ashby Road  
SCUNTHORPE  
North Lincolnshire  
DN16 1AB

Author: Heather Barratt  
Date: 4 January 2016

### **Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

- 1) Department for Transport (2011) "Travel Training Good Practice", [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/4483/guidance.doc](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4483/guidance.doc).
- 2) North Lincolnshire Council: Policy Statement 2015/16 for students aged 16-18 in further education and students with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 19-25
- 3) DfE (2015) " Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years". [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

**Current Structure – Transport Operations**



Appendix B

Proposed Structure – Transport Operations

